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29 July 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: U-2 Reconnaissance of Indonesia

1. It is understood that you have concluded that reconnaissance of Indonesia is immediately necessary. It is also understood you plan to indicate to Mr. Gilpatrick your preference for SAC to accomplish this job with their U-2 assets rather than by means of the IDEALIST capability.

2. There are two major considerations you may wish to take into account before proceeding along the foregoing line, namely:

a. The effect of accomplishing this mission with IDEALIST assets in the context of other obligations in Cuba and the Far East, and

b. The operational and political implications of SAC undertaking this assignment.

3. With regard to the first of these we have carefully assessed whether deploying one of the U-2s [redacted] to the Philippines [redacted] would jeopardize our ability to carry out our present and foreseeable obligations in these areas. It is my conclusion that there would be no jeopardy immediately to our ability to meet the requirements in these areas. Two planes would remain in [redacted] and the forecast for August by no means overextends these assets. If a U-2 were deployed to the Philippines, it would be able to operate against North Vietnam at the present authorized level, i.e., one mission per month, even as we did in December 1960 and January 1961. This, of course, would relieve [redacted]

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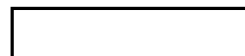
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25X1 of the North Vietnam responsibility. It is true that the major support elements would have to be drawn from Edwards, with some support [] which would not jeopardize the operational capability in support of the two remaining aircraft. It would be feasible to provide operational and logistics support from Edwards [] with limited augmentation from headquarters for a limited time, on the order of four to six weeks. It should be recognized, however, that were a new crisis to arise in some other part of the world requiring IDEALIST capability, or if the Cuban coverage would have to be markedly increased, we would no longer have adequate assets to deal with all requirements.

4. The second question deals with operational and political factors inherent in the performance of this mission by the military. It should be noted here that the SAC U-2 capability (J-57s) would almost certainly, we know from previous experience in Indonesia and in a like climate in North Vietnam, produce contrails across the lower altitude profile, namely, 67,000 feet. In these latitudes near the equator, condensation trails at extremely high altitudes are a year around phenomenon.

5. Though a shoot-down is most unlikely, on the political side the contingency must be anticipated that some catastrophe would land a U-2 in the hands of the Indonesians or that it would be positively identified as such from visual sightings. While repercussions in either of these cases can be anticipated, it would be adverse to our interests, it seems to me, were the plane to be clearly labelled as SAC, and were the pilot to be a member of the United States military. The effect might be alleviated somewhat by a cover story which has not as yet been constructed. The cover story, however good, would stand little chance against the Indonesian outcry. IDEALIST assets were last employed over Indonesia in the spring 1955. Several changes in the Indonesian defense posture have occurred since that time. Principal among which are the addition of high-performance fighter aircraft (MIG 17s, MIG 19s) to their inventory, as well as the addition of a limited radar tracking capability. While neither of these developments pose an immediate threat to the survivability of either the SAC J-57 U-2s or our own, their existence does provide the Indonesians with the capability of making an airborne positive identification of the aircraft by type. In addition to a possible radar track, there is no known GCI or Airborne-Intercept capability



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in the hands of the Indonesians at this moment; although it does not seem unreasonable to assume that if they were planning a major military offensive, these critical weapons and assets could not be supplied by the Soviet in short order.

6. It would seem to me that in the immediate period ahead extending through 17 August, the wisest course, in the interests of preserving the essentially covert nature of the reconnaissance, would be to stretch our capability and accomplish the assignment with the understanding at this time that plans should be developed now to provide for the following contingent course of action: That at such time as the operational requirement exceeded the available IDEALIST assets in place in the Philippines, additional support in terms of aircraft and related materiel be provided [] by SAC to CIA with operational control remaining in our hands.

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7. On the other hand if military and political developments in Indonesia vis-a-vis West Irian break wide open and involve direct military action on the part of Indonesia versus Holland, [] and the requirement for reconnaissance be turned directly over to the Air Force for them to discharge with whatever equipments they deem necessary and operating from whatever bases are available to them proximate to the area of hostilities.

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SIGNED

JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.
Acting Deputy Director
(Research)

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